

California
Fair Political Practices Commission
Reporting Governmental Compensation

One of the express purposes of the Political Reform Act is to provide transparency in governmental decision making so that the public is confident that decisions are made impartially and free from bias. To that end, the law requires state and local public officials, employees and consultants to disclose certain personal financial interests. The Fair Political Practices Commission ("FPPC") is the agency that develops the public disclosure statement, Statement of Economic Interests (Form 700) and also receives and reviews the statements for high ranking state and local government officials.

In light of reports that some officials have received overly generous compensation packages without public knowledge, the FPPC is proposing more transparency and greater public access to information by encouraging state and local officials to voluntarily disclose their governmental salaries and other compensation benefits. By choosing to take this step, California elected and appointed officials can lead in the effort to restore the public's trust in our institutions of government.

The FPPC's proposal is designed to lay the groundwork for legislation that would make such disclosure mandatory. Any future mandated disclosure should provide citizens with relevant information that is easy to understand, but must not impose overly burdensome rules on the government officials. We hope that public officials will be involved in the discussions used to lay the groundwork for legislation.

FAQs

1. Q. In addition to my salary, what other benefits should I include under "Other Compensation?"

A. One of the purposes of this effort is to gather a comprehensive list of various employment benefits. Include benefits such as an automobile allowance, a telecommunication equipment stipend, a personal loan, and agency payments for pension plans. Officials should feel free to list any type of compensation. For questions on this matter, use the FPPC advice line at 1.866.275.3772 or the advice email at advice@fppc.ca.gov.

2. Q. My agency pays my state bar dues and makes a pension payment. Should I total both amounts when determining the box to complete in "Other Compensation?"

A. Yes.

3. Q. I have a contract with the agency and file the Form 700 as a consultant. How do I report my income from the agency?

A. Mark the appropriate box in "Other Compensation."

4. Q. Why should I complete this addendum? I think it should apply to only top senior managers.
- A. The Form 700 is completed by officials that make governmental decisions, thus, it is appropriate that all such officials should complete the form in order to provide voters with as much information as possible. However, the FPPC solicits your reasons as to why certain positions should not be required to complete a mandatory form.
5. Q. As a state employee, my salary is already published on some major newspaper websites, why should this form be completed? The Controller has also published this information on his website.
- A. There are several websites that post governmental income; however, each varies in what is posted and what agencies are included. Providing this information on a single form allows citizens access to the information in one place. Further, the public can go to one agency for the information for many state and local elected officials, individuals appointed to key state boards and commissions and some special districts.